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M. FROIDEVAUX'S PARIS LETTER.

PARIS, January 20, 1904.

Among the recent addresses before the Société de Géographie, attention may be called to that of M. Lucien Briet, adjunct-secretary of the Speleological Society, on a portion of the Upper Pyrenees, as yet little known to tourists and even to scientific men, the white marble peak of the Munia, which rests upon an enormous mass of granite and is crowned with slate. This superb mountain, 10,300 feet high, lies across the frontier and flanks on the east the great mass of Mont-Perdu, which dominates the amphitheatre of Troumouse, the most imposing of all those carved in the marble of the Pyrenees.

M. de Martonne, professor of geography in the University of Rennes, treated the subject of the southern Carpathians, the character and the relief of the country, and the curious pastoral life of the population, so singularly adapted to its environment.

A naturalist, M. Eichard, described his journeys of exploration on the coast of Mozambique in search of the pearl-oyster beds; and Dr. Noel Bernard made an interesting report of his studies on the curious plateau of Boloven, in Annam, a territory of nearly 4,000 square miles, composed of a series of terraces separated by valleys varying in depth from 800 to 4,000 feet. The population numbers about 20,000, the largest group being that of the Bolovens, war-like savages, almost always fighting among themselves. There seems to be no great future for this region, which is certainly less desirable than Tranninh as a site for *sanatoria*.

The Société de Géographie Commerciale recently celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of its foundation—a date which completed also the twenty-fifth year in office of its active Secretary, M. Gau-thiot.

A committee has been formed to compile a methodical inventory of the resources of French West Africa. This committee is now engaged, under the direction of the Colonial Administration, in classifying all the unpublished manuscript documents at the various posts of the Colony, and intends to prosecute by means of technical commissions the investigations which call for special knowledge.

The publications of this new Committee will possess at once a scientific and a practical interest; a publication exclusively scientific is the Atlas of Volcanoes, projected under the direction of

M. Elisée Reclus by the Belgian Society of Astronomy, Meteorology, and Physics of the Globe.

Nearly all the explorations to be noted are in Africa. In Morocco, M. Gaston Buchet has discovered Berber ruins. In the Sahara, Lieut. Besset and Capt. Pein, in command of two separate expeditions against the Hoggar, have fixed important points on their routes and added to our geographical knowledge. In Western Africa, Lieut. Dyé is working on the hydrography of the river Sénégal; and in Dahomey, Lieut. Drot has brought back from three years of travel a treasure of maps and of sketches not less important than those collected by M. d'Huart, Commander of the Chad flotilla, from his explorations among the islands of the lake.

The search for a water communication between the Benue and Lake Chad by way of the Tuburi swamp and the Logone may be regarded as successful since the voyage of Capt. Lenfant. It seems to be proved that the Tuburi is navigable every year for a period of three months.

There is no new information concerning the Chevalier Mission; but M. Alfred Fourneau accomplished in July last a tour to Kanem and returned by water, passing through the archipelago and observing its continuous and rapid extension towards the west.

In America the Créqui-Montfort and Sénéchal de la Grange Mission has done good scientific work in the study of the region comprised between Antofagasta, Jujuy, and Tarifa and the Peruvian frontier, completing the explorations of Col. Pando in certain parts of Bolivia. The detailed report will set before us the geographical results attained in the Lake Poopo region, M. Courty's geological investigations, and the studies in ethnography and archæology.

Dr. Charcot's plan of exploration in the Antarctic, as arranged with Dr. Nordenskjöld, is as follows: His ship, *Le Français*, will steer for the South Shetlands and that part of Graham Land southwest of the region explored by the *Belgica*. The ship once anchored in a safe harbour, Dr. Charcot will undertake sledge journeys, either towards the scene of Dr. Nordenskjöld's explorations or to the wholly unknown Alexander I. Land. This will occupy the summer of 1904-1905, and the ship will return to the civilized world in April, 1905.

There is not much to be said of new publications, rarely less numerous than at this time, though we find in the tenth volume of the *Nouvelles Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Littéraires* such reports as those of M. Gaston Buchet on Northern Morocco, M. Mathuiseulx on Tripoli, Count de Barthélémy on Annam and Laos, M.

Menant's study of the Parsis in British India, and M. Eugène Poisson's report on rubber-trees and other Colonial plants in Brazil, in the West Indies, and in Costa Rica. Mention must be made, notwithstanding its archæological character, of a study by M. S. Gsell, entitled: "Administrative Inquiry concerning Ancient Hydraulic Works in Algeria," a book of unquestionable value for the knowledge of the climate and the hydrography, not less than for the history, of the country.

The Commission Française des Glaciers has published its second annual report in the 29th volume of the *Annuaire* of the Club Alpin Français. In this report M. Paul Girardin relates his observations in the summer of 1902, in Haute-Maurienne, in the Grandes Rousses and in the Oisans (Savoy and Dauphiny). The conclusions reached are:

1st. That in all the glaciers of this region the movement of retreat, after having been very rapid, seems in later years to have slackened, and even to have ceased altogether;

2d. That in consequence of this movement of retreat, which began towards 1860, nearly all these glaciers have been brought to a similar topographical situation and reduced to the state of plateau glaciers, ending at the upper edge of freshly-abandoned escarpments;

3d. That in these glaciers the retreat manifests itself, at present, by a movement of transfer of the front from left to right, that is to say—the glaciers being turned to the west—a movement from the side towards the sun to the side towards the shade.

Following this report is M. Ch. Rabot's Review of Glaciology for 1902, perhaps even more valuable than that for the previous year, but lacking, unfortunately, the index, which would add to its usefulness.

The Commission des Glaciers has published also the observations made by the Forest Administration in Haute-Savoie and Savoie on the snowfall and avalanches during the winters of 1899-1900, 1900-1901, and 1901-1902.

In a recent number of *La Géographie*, M. Emile Chaix-Du Bois has a note on a phenomenon of erosion by running water observed by him near the confluence of the Valserine with the Rhone.

Though not geographical, the work of MM. William and George Marçais on the Arab Monuments of Tlemcen presents a real ethnographical interest. Articles of value to the geographer and the geologist will be found in the *Bulletin* of the Comité de l'Afrique Francaise.

Of publications upon Asia there is but one of importance, the volume of the Pavie Mission devoted to the researches on the Natural History of Eastern Indo-China. With this admirably-illustrated work and the atlas recently distributed the series of the Pavie Mission approaches completion.

I must not omit to mention the three books lately published by Mme. Coudreau, describing her journeys to the River Curua, to the Mapuera, and the Maycuru, each with its illustrative maps, and continuing in this way with rare ability the work so well begun with her husband.

HENRI FROIDEVAUX.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1904.

A Regular Meeting of the Society was held at Mendelssohn Hall, No. 119 West Fortieth Street, on Tuesday, February 23, 1904, at 8.30 o'clock P.M.

Vice-President Moore in the chair.

The following persons, recommended by the Council, were elected Fellows:

Mary Judson Averett. Stephen Avery. George A. Archer.

The Chairman then introduced the speaker of the evening, the Rev. Putnam Cady, who addressed the Society on The Physical and Historical Geography of the Dead Sea Region.

Maps and views were shown on the screen.

On motion, the Society adjourned.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE NEXT MEETING of the Society will be held at Mendelssohn Hall, No. 119 West Fortieth Street, on Tuesday, March 15, 1904, at 8.30 o'clock P.M.

Mr. William Morris Davis, of Harvard University, will address the Society on his Journey in Turkestan.

EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CONGRESS.—Fellows of the Society are reminded that to acquire membership in the Congress